

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

Technical Specifications: Supported Employment Services

(Effective July 1, 2004)

A. Service Definition:

The Supported Employment Program is intended to provide services to individuals who, because of the severity of their disabilities, would not be able to function independently in employment without intensive ongoing support services.

In transitional employment, the provision of ongoing support services must include continuing sequential job placements until job permanency is achieved.

In Supported Employment:

1. The individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.
2. The individual is a person with the most severe disability.
3. A comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs of the individual including an evaluation of rehabilitation, career, and job needs which identifies supported employment as the appropriate rehabilitation objective for the individual."

The assessment should specify:

1. The supported employment services to be provided.
2. The expected extended services needed (long-term support).
3. The source of the resource for the extended services, which may include natural supports.

It is not DVR's intent that each provider must follow a particular design, it is a requirement, however, that vocational support services, advocacy and follow-along must occur after employment of the supported employee.

B. Applicable National Standards:

The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) standards applicable to the provision of supported employment services are available upon request.

C. Process Standards:

1. The **Comprehensive Supported Employment Assessment** must include:
 - a. Work skills, money management, learning modality, transportation, mobility, work tolerance, social skills, employment disincentives, strengths, supports, self care, self direction, interpersonal skills.
 - b. At a minimum, 80% must occur in the community. The assessment should not exceed 60 days. This Assessment does NOT include observations or evaluations conducted in simulated or congregate work environments. It may also include:
 - c. Interviews with the consumer and significant others.
 - d. Short-term job tryouts.
 - e. On-the-job evaluations.

2. **Supported Employment Job Development** is the process of identifying, developing, or creating an employment situation matched to the individual's vocational goals and to the job requirements of the employer. The outcome of Supported Employment Job Development is an offer of employment to a consumer that both achieves the individual's vocational goal and meets the definition of supported employment. Supported Employment Job Development must meet the following standards:
- a. General marketing of supported employment to gain employer commitments to hire supported employees
 - b. Targeted job development on behalf of a specific individual.
 - c. Job development includes the preparation of an employment proposal to a specific employer, including descriptions for job restructuring, where necessary, and/or strategies to address job accommodations, which is intended to result in an offer of employment to the consumer.
 - d. Job development includes the identification of the long-term support resources available to assist the individual with job retention and identification of the impact of proposed employment on the individual's benefits and eligibility for services, which the individual may need.
 - e. The plan for job development must clearly support the identification of employer expectations and strategies to meet these expectations with regard to both the qualifications of the supported employee and to the support services available to assure successful job retention. The plan should reflect consumer choice, consumer control of services and person-centered planning.
 - f. Supported Employment Job Development is not to exceed 90 calendar days. If a placement has not occurred after 90 days, a staffing should be convened with the DVR staff and consumer to review and revise, if appropriate, the plan.
3. **Supported Employment Ongoing Support** is the systematic process of providing time-limited vocational services, at least twice a month face to face with the consumer and once a month with the employer. This design ensures that a supported employee acquires the skills necessary for successful job performance and that appropriate ongoing support is available to the supported employee and to the employer. The outcome of successful job placement is retention of employment, which is paid employment meeting the individual's vocational goal and goal for weekly hours of work. Supported Employment Ongoing Support must meet the following standards.
- a. The scope of Supported Employment Ongoing Support includes:
 - 1) Job skill training/coaching techniques can be provided by coach or coworker, which is most appropriate.
 - 2) Sensitivity training to enhance natural supports and physical/social integration of the supported employee.
 - 3) Meets the expectations of the employer.
 - 4) Strategies to foster job expansion/promotion.
 - b. The plan for Supported Employment Ongoing Support must:
 - 1) Clearly support the philosophy of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended which emphasize consumer choice, consumer control of services, and person-centered planning.
 - 2) Identify employer expectations with regard to both consumer job performance and to support services and describe the strategies that will be used to meet these expectations.
 - 3) Supported Employment Ongoing Support is not to exceed 18 months before transition is made to long-term support resources. Transition to long term support resources should occur when the individual has completed an individualized plan of services and can maintain employment with ongoing support. This level of stabilization is generally achieved with 6 to 12 months of job coaching support.

Social Security Job Retention Services:

For consumers who are SSDI and/or SSI recipients and are working an established amount above the Substantial Gainful Activity level, the provider is expected to continue with job retention services. Job retention services include a minimum monthly contact with the consumer to verify continued earnings and satisfactory work situation plus any intervention necessary to maintain their current job or locate a similar job should the first job end. Milestone payments for job retention will be paid at 3, 6 and 9 months of employment above the earnings level as stated in the DVR statewide fee schedule.

D. Outcome Standards:

1. To assist with consumer choice and vendor selection the provider must report annually:
 - a. Employment outcomes of supported employees including average hours of work, range of hours of work, wages and benefits.
 - b. Types of work and nature of the businesses in which supported employees are hired.
 - c. Degree to which the consumers have increased their independence at the job site.
 - d. Increases in the number of hours, wages, job duties and benefits.
 - e. Comparison between the consumer goals for type of work and hours of work and the actual outcomes.
 - f. Consumer/family satisfaction.
 - g. Consumer/family recommendations for improvement.
2. The vendor will annually collect data and provides a report on the employers who have hired supported employees, which includes:
 - a. A measure of their satisfaction with the supported employee;
 - b. A measure of their satisfaction with the vendor's services, e.g., Willingness to provide a written testimonial, referral to other employers, hire additional consumers, etc.
 - c. Employer recommendations for improvement.

E. Reporting Standards:

1. **Comprehensive Supported Employment Assessment** reporting requirements include the following:
 - a. Individual vocational goals
 - b. Short-term employment objectives.
 - c. Description of the individual's strengths.
 - d. A reasonable expectation of the source of long-term support including PASS/IRWE, Natural Supports, Public Funding, CIP, COP, Private Pay, Human Service Board and 51 Board.
 - e. Comprehensive Supported Employment Assessment is an evaluation of an individual's functional abilities in the community. The outcome of a comprehensive supported employment assessment is a **Report of Written Recommendations for an individual to become successful as a supported employee** to include a description of:
 - 1) The individual's short-term and long-term employment objectives.
 - 2) The individual's strengths and skills.
 - 3) Issues/barriers to be addressed.
 - 4) Nature and intensity of services.

2. **Supported Employment Job Development** Reporting Requirements include:
 - a. A brief written plan encompassing: the consumer's job objective and preferences of the consumer for weekly hours of work desired/needed, and the identification of roles and responsibilities of the job developer, the consumer, the DVR staff, and others from the consumer's support network.
 - b. It should also include specific employers to be contacted or failing these specific strategies to be employed. Every 30 days a brief progress report that has been shared with the consumer will be mailed to the DVR staff.
3. **Supported Employment Ongoing Support** Reporting Requirements include:
 - a. A description of any consumer employment-related issues/barriers and/or issues raised by the consumer's formal and informal support network.
 - b. A description of services and strategies that will address the individual's objectives and the issues raised by the consumer and/or support network in relation to the specific employment offer. This description should identify the agency, organization or individual--including the consumer--responsible for each service, strategy or resource. It should include hours, expansion opportunities, nature and source of supports, and needed assistive technology.
 - c. A description of the employment setting, which addresses the components of the definition of supported employment as it relates to integration.
 - d. A description of the specific barriers as they relate to transportation, recreation/leisure, family and significant others and the impact of earnings on disability benefits.
 - e. A description of the plan for long-term support including natural supports, PASS/IRWE, private public funding.
 - f. An estimation of the time required for successful job retention.
4. Reports are due to the referring DVR staff within 10 working days of completion of the service, if less than one month of service is needed. If more than one month of service is needed, reports are due to the DVR staff within 10 working days of the end of the month service was provided.

An electronic progress report is required monthly to document Social Security recipient Job Retention services. These reports must include confirmed wages above the Substantial Gainful Activity level plus dates and nature of all consumer and employer contacts. These reports will document the interventions necessary to enable the consumer to maintain their employment or obtain similar employment if their first job ends. SSA Job Retention reports are to be e-mailed to the DVR Social Security Reimbursement Coordinator.